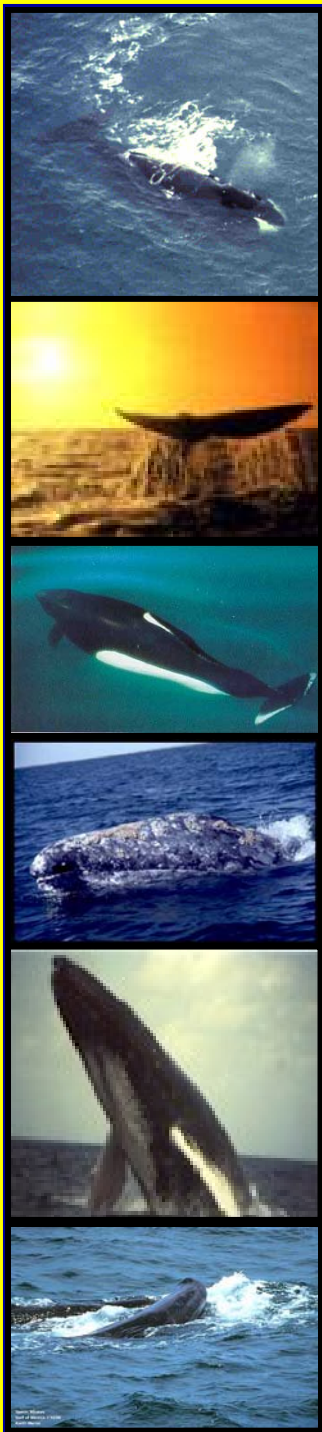


Presentation at the First Plenary Meeting
of the Advisory Committee on Acoustic
Impacts on Marine Mammals

3-5 February 2004

Bethesda, Maryland

*This presentation is the sole product of the
author(s) and does not reflect the view of the
Marine Mammal Commission or the Advisory
Committee on Acoustic Impacts on Marine
Mammals.*



Minerals Management Service

Our Role, Responsibility, and Response as a Federal Regulatory Agency

Meeting of the Advisory Committee
on Anthropogenic Sound and Marine Mammals
February 2004

Dick Wildermann, Chief Environmental Division, Offshore Minerals Management
Chuck Schoennagel, Deputy Regional Director, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

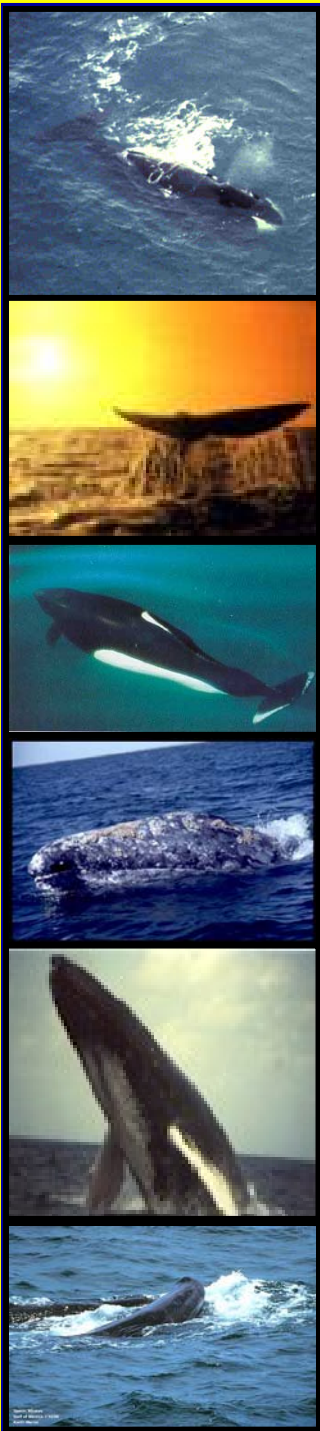
MMS Role

MMS regulates the offshore oil and gas industry and non-energy mineral extraction



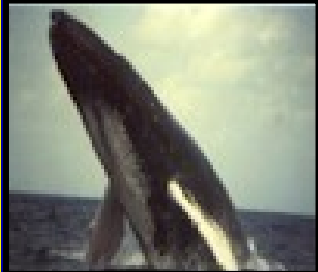
MMS Responsibility

to achieve a "balance" between
mineral resource development
and protecting the environment.



Sources of Noise from OCS-Related Activities

- Seismic surveys
- Operation of fixed structures/drilling rigs
- Helicopter traffic
- Service vessel traffic
- Explosive removals of offshore structures



MMS Protected Species Environmental Compliance

- Endangered Species Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- National Environmental Policy Act
- OCS Lands Act



MMS Protected Species Environmental Process

- Analyze impacts
- Design mitigation
- Monitor
- Provide information to support regulation



MMS Protected Species Environmental Analysis

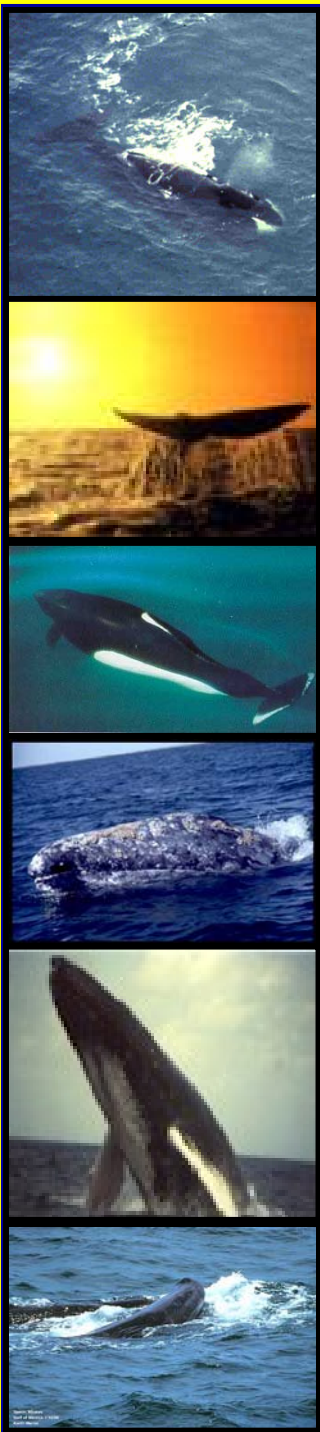
- Programmatic EA on G&G activities on the Gulf of Mexico OCS
- Programmatic EA on structure removal operations on the Gulf of Mexico OCS



MMS Environmental Studies Program

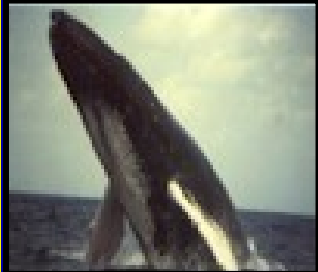
The OCS Lands Act –

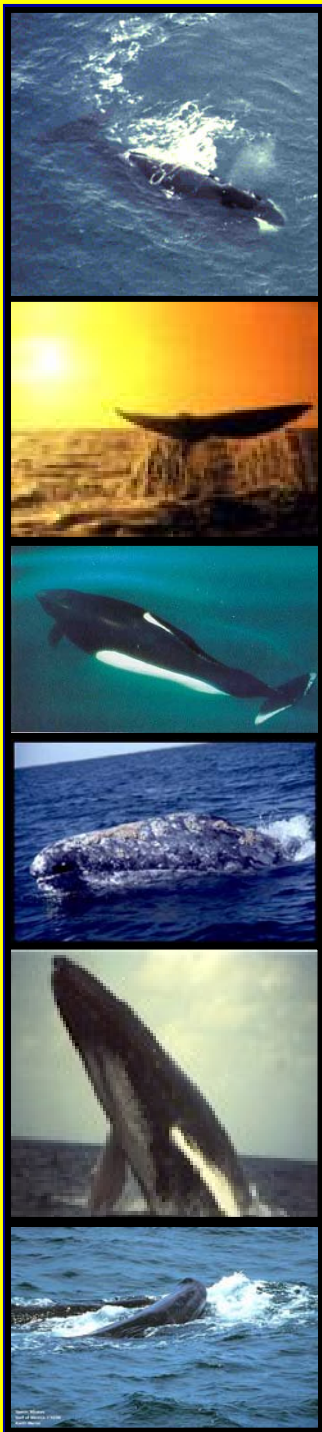
Provides information to predict, assess, and manage impacts on the human, marine, and coastal environments of the OCS and nearshore areas that may be affected by OCS oil and gas activities.



MMS Protected Species Research

Identify, fund, and participate in research to protect and enhance protected species and their habitat.





MMS Protected Species Research

- Impacts research (SWSS – tagging, CEE)
- NRC “Characterizing Biologically Significant Marine Mammal Behavior.”
- Surveys – population and distribution (CeTAP, BWASP, GulfCet)
- Peer-reviewed publications

The MMS Perspective

Research results to date tend to reinforce expectation that potential effects of industry noise on marine mammals will be:

- Difficult to detect
- Open to debate



MMS Approach to Regulating Impacts

Judicious Mitigation –

- Establish the basis for new mitigations
- Evaluate the potential regulatory costs and technical feasibility
- Balance



Context

- Contribution of offshore oil and gas exploration and development to anthropogenic noise in the oceans?
- How do effects compare to:
 - Fisheries activities
 - Recreation and tourism
 - Marine transportation



The Challenge

Finding the appropriate balance:

- Maintaining significant contribution toward meeting National energy needs
- Continuing move towards deeper water and subsurface activities
- Large costs and potential to impact the National Energy Policy

